

# Storm Country Polly

by Grace Miller White

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## "LOVE! H—L!"

**SYNOPSIS.**—Occupying a dilapidated shack in the Silent City, a squatter settlement near Ithaca, New York, Polly Hopkins lives with her father, small Jerry, and an old woman, Granny Hope. On an adjacent farm, Oscar Bennett, prosperous farmer, is a neighbor. He is secretly married to Evelyn Robertson, supposedly wealthy girl of the neighborhood. Polly alone knows their secret. Marcus MacKenzie, who owns the ground the squatters occupy, is their determined enemy. Polly overhears a conversation between MacKenzie and a stranger, in which the former avows his intention of driving the squatters from his land. The stranger sympathizes with the squatters, and earns Polly's gratitude. Evelyn Robertson discovers from her mother that they are not rich, as she supposed, but practically living on the bounty of Robert Percival, Evelyn's cousin.

## CHAPTER III.

As she ran, Polly Hopkins cogitated on MacKenzie's words. Evelyn's mother had said that she was as old as she was fifty.

Mrs. Robertson! The arrogant woman who lived on the hill in a house almost big enough to hold every person in the Silent City ought not to say anything against the squatters. If the grand lady only knew it, her own daughter had stooped to a trick such as would put to shame any but-woman. A squatter wife would not leave her man to do for himself or deny him before the world. Added to Polly's personal humiliation was MacKenzie's threat against Daddy Hopkins.

The hope Robert Percival's words had instilled in her seemed to die as she traveled, and her heart beat with fear, for should Old Marc get his fingers on Daddy Hopkins, Polly had no doubt there would be nothing but imprisonment for him and the graveyard for her and Jerry. She could not think of life without her father. Not a single night had she ever been away from his kindly love and attention—and Wee Jerry! A vivid picture rose before her of the baby's grief if he could not straddle daddy's neck and play his father was a horse.

When she reached the top of the ragged rocks, she pulled up and cast a glance over the lake. The ceiling of her name made her turn swiftly. Recognizing Evelyn Robertson's voice, she waited while the other girl came down the path from MacKenzie's woods. She was quite unlike the little squatter. A fashionable raincoat protected her from the wet; and she carried a light umbrella in her gloved hand. The greeting between them was one of embarrassment.

"I were goin' to find my daddy," Polly explained. "He's somewhere along the lake. I didn't know I'd come on you this mornin'."

The memory of Mrs. Robertson's words brought a rush of color to her face, and she looked down at her feet. There surged up in her a feeling that she did not want anything to do with any of these people. Why should she? They were rich; and she was only a squatter brat! She started to walk away.

"I said," she flung over her shoulder, "I were lookin' for my daddy. Good-by."

Evelyn Robertson was not interested in Jeremiah Hopkins. As far as she was concerned, the whole Silent City might be washed off into the waves and carried away. Her own troubles filled her mind. The shock of her mother's disclosure stunned her, for without the help she had expected, she could see no way out of Oscar Bennett's clutches. In the meantime, the squatter girl was her only means of communication.

"Wait, Pollyop, wait a minute! I came down just to speak to you."

Wheeling slowly around, Polly faced her.

"What do you want?" she asked in surly tones.

"Pollyop," ejaculated Evelyn, coming swiftly to her side, "I'm almost scared to death. My cousin, Bob—oh, you've got to help me again!"

Bob! Then the soldier in the uniform was Evelyn's cousin. Bob! That was the nicest name in all the world, a name fitted for the man who had dropped into the Silent City to help along the squatters. Suddenly her mood changed. She forgot Oscar Bennett and his odious words, forgot that the girl crying for her aid had allowed her mother to say dreadful things against her and Daddy Hopkins. If Evelyn were related to the soldier, then Polly Hopkins would do anything Miss Robertson asked of her.

"What do you want?" she repeated shyly, blushing.

"It's this," answered Evelyn. "Mr. MacKenzie's home—and my cousin came with him. My cousin, Robert Percival!"

"Is your cousin a handsome feller with long legs an' a face—"

Pollyop stopped for lack of words. How could she describe the fine, sympathetic countenance she had seen from the hut roof?

"Yes," Evelyn interjected, "Bob's awfully good-looking, and he's tall too. Now listen, Pollyop; you must go to hear again for me this very day—Oh, eat, he's so mean to me!"

Polly considered the pretty face a moment. She could not understand why the home-coming of the cousin and Old Marc should make Evelyn so flustered. With her steady eyes upon her she was studying over this question when Evelyn burst forth:

"Tell Oscar I haven't any money! I just can't get it now! And, Pollyop, tell him too that he mustn't write me any more letters. My mother—well, if she found one of them, she'd turn me out of the house."

Polly's mouth flew open. She could not conceive of a girl doing anything in the world bad enough to make her mother turn her out of her home.

"Lordy! Would she, now?" she gasped.

"My mother's proud," said Evelyn, in excuse. "You know that, Polly."

Certainly Polly knew it! Hadn't she ducked out of sight of the unsympathetic lady many a time when lurking near the Robertson home with a message from Oscar to Evelyn?

"I don't know what I will do, Polly," the other girl went on, "if you don't help me—and some time I'll really do something for you."

A temptation to blurt out the words Marcus MacKenzie had spoken assailed the squatter girl; but Evelyn looked worried! Polly's heart was as soft as the velvet in her eyes when she came upon trouble of any kind.

"You've been good to Wee Jerry," she interposed gently. "Awful good. He's most giggles his little life away when I bring him the goodies you send him."

"I'm going to do a lot for both of you," returned Evelyn impulsively, "and today I brought this bag of candy for the baby. Here! Take it! And you'll go to Oscar for me as soon as you can, won't you?"

Smiling, Polly slipped the package of sweets into her pocket. She could forgive anything against herself for the sake of seeing Wee Jerry smile and hearing him crow over the contents of the small bag.

"Yep," she agreed, "an' say all you tell me to. But what if he kicks up a row? He's gettin' awful pernickity, Oscar is!"

A sharp cry from Evelyn was followed by:

"Tell him he mustn't! Make him promise he won't! And—and, Pollyop, I'll tell you something else, if you'll promise never to tell."

"I never told anything yet, have I?" Pollyop protested in low, indignant tones.

"No one must ever know about Oscar and me," Evelyn began, still harping



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upon the great fear that obsessed her, "because—"

"Because of your ma," interrupted Polly. "Sure I know that!"

A slim hand was raised in partial protest.

"Mother's an awful worry to me sometimes, but it's not she altogether. But—but—"

"Then—then—it's your fine-lookin' cousin," came brokenly from Polly, during the pause in Miss Robertson's statement.

"Of course, I wouldn't have him know for anything," Evelyn nodded assent. "Oh, goodness, I might as well tell it and get it over. I love some one else, and he loves me, Pollyop. I want to be his wife more than I've ever wanted anything before. He's wealthy, dear, and I've got to marry him."

Polly's face gathered a shocked expression. How could she marry any one when she was already wedded to Oscar Bennett? By any law Polly knew of, a girl could not have two husbands at the same time. Even the squatters, in their careless way of living, did nothing like that.

"You can't tie up to no other man

while you belong to Oscar, Miss Eve," she ventured gravely.

"Well, I know it; of course I know it," retorted Evelyn, resenting the censure in the other's tones; "but I've got to be free. I'm so frantic, I don't much care how. That's the way Oscar's got to help me! Anyway make him understand he's got to wait; he must be quiet and not bother me. Then come tonight, and let me know what he says. Will you, Polly?"

The squatter girl nodded. She would rather have been switched than see Oscar Bennett again.

"Yep," she assented. "I'll hunt him up late this afternoon and then hustle right over to you. I got to go now!"

For some moments after Evelyn left her, Polly watched the slim figure on the path to the woods. Then she suddenly remembered Marcus MacKenzie and without a backward glance hurried swiftly toward the south.

Meantime three squatters from the Silent City were in the Bad Man's ravine, dressing the fish they had netted the night before. One enormous man was seated on a flat rock, his bare feet almost touching the water as it hurried by to the lake. On his shoulders, with his legs wound tightly around the man's neck, sat a small boy, little more than a baby. He was shivering with cold, and as the spring rain shot its drops upon his face, he lifted a small hand and brushed them away. Seemingly oblivious of the weight against his swarthy head, the man picked up a fish and contemplated it with a scowl. Then he proceeded to clean it deftly.

The silence was unbroken for a long time except by the rushing of the water, the gruesome running of the knives over the fish scales and a little whimper, now and then, from the child astride the man's neck.

"I heard in town," broke forth Lye Braeger, "that Old Marc MacKenzie's comin' home. Here's where us squatters get h—l flung at us good and plenty."

Jeremiah Hopkins stopped his work and frowned at the speaker.

"He'd best be a-lookin' out for hisself," he muttered. "Mebbe he'll get a taste of the hot place if he does any struttin' around the Silent City."

"Mebbe," repeated Larry Bishop, and no more. Marcus MacKenzie, handsome, smug and rich, had been the instrument that had moved the hands of the law to swing open the prison doors and shove Larry Bishop inside just when his young wife needed him most.

Once in sight of the roaring water, rushing in torrents from the Bad Man's ravine, Polly sent out a peculiar little trill; and the hoarse answer of a man's voice mingled with its echo as it struck the enormous, up-roaring rock slabs.

Polly's heart bounded and lost its heavy weight of fear. Daddy Hopkins had responded ponderously to her first call. In another moment she was crawling up the jagged sides of the deep gulf. As she came up to them, Hopkins' companions waved her a greeting, but stopped their work at the sight of her sober face.

"What's up, lassie?" demanded Hopkins. "You ain't seen a ghost, have you?"

"Worse'n that, Daddy," she replied. "Much worse'n that! Old Marc's home, an' I heard him say he's goin' to root us squatters out of the Silent City."

A brute-like glare flashed into Larry Bishop's eyes.

"Did he, now, brat?" he muttered, taking up his knife and looking at it. Polly squatted down beside her father, slipping one hand under his arm. The other she gave to the child, who grasped it eagerly.

"Did he, now?" came in repetition from Bishop's throat.

"Yep," asserted Pollyop, with an emphatic bob of her head, "an' I come to tell you all you'd best be a-lookin' out for 'im. Daddy, he says you're the worst man in the settlement, but everybody knows he's a liar."

"He'd best be lookin' out for his own hide," Hopkins shot back like a flash of steel. "I ain't in any mind to stand much of his guff, the dirty duffer."

Withdrawing her arm from her father's, she leaned her chin on her hand. She wanted to urge them not to worry too much, to tell them of the other man, rich like old Marc, who had expressed in tender tones a kindly interest in their welfare. Somehow, though, the words would not come. The peaceful figure did not fit in with the secret understanding that expressed itself in the frowning, furtive glances that passed from one to the other of her men-folks.

"He's awful, powerful strong," she ventured in answer to the look she had intercepted, "an' powerful rich!"

"An' money's what makes the maw go," struck in Lye Braeger.

"Sure, so 'is," answered Polly. "But 'tain't everything in the world. I got Granny Hope's word for that. An' she knows a lot about love, Granny does."

Larry Bishop's sudden laugh cracked in the middle, and he swallowed fiercely.

"Love! H—l!" he burst out husk-

ily. "Granny'll know soon what havin' money means. Some mornin' the Silent City'll wake up an' find the Hope shack burned to the rocks."

"Mebbe not," replied Polly simply. "Anyway, Granny don't need her but now she's livin' with us."

A sudden thought of Robert Percival shot a queer little thrill through her, and she got confusedly to her feet.

"Lordy, but the wind's cold this mornin'!" she exclaimed.

"That's so," answered her father. "It's too blamed cold for the baby to stay here. Get off'n my neck, boy, an' go along home with Polly, an' get her up a bit."

The child set up a howl that flung itself back and forth in squealing echoes from side to side of the ravine and the struggle of unloosening Wee Jerry's fingers from his father's thick hair was short and sharp.

"Take him home, brat," said Jeremiah to Pollyop. "He's like a frog."



"Sure, So 'Tis," answered Polly. "But 'tain't Everything in the World."

poor imp. We got a full hour's work yet."

With the child's hand in hers, Polly looked at her father.

"Come when you can, Daddy. I got a surprise for you."

"Good little kid, your girl is, Jeremiah," droned Braeger, and he grunted as he straightened out his legs.

Hopkins bent over to catch another glimpse of his children.

"Yep," he agreed, a wavering smile touching his lips. "God love 'er! She's like her ma was at her age—as near like as two peas in a pod."

## CHAPTER IV.

On entering the shack Pollyop found Granny Hope still asleep. Then she replenished the fire and sat down with Jerry on her lap. She disrobed him, dried the small body, and placed him on the cot under the blankets. Another piece of candy was popped into the ever-ready little mouth; and he cuddled down contentedly.

His daughter's cheerful face, when Jeremiah came home for his dinner, drove away, for the time being, the dread her announcement of MacKenzie's return had stirred in him. Her description of mending the roof brought a wry smile to his face. She sat on his knee while he smoked his pipe and chattered of the little intimate things of the lakeside, and later sent him and Jerry off to Larry Bishop's shack, feeling the better for food and warmth and love.

At five o'clock, milk-pail in hand, she took the lane that led to the Bennett farm. Nothing but her promise to Evelyn would have dragged her again that day into Oscar's presence. Nor did she consider that the message she had to deliver would incline the farmer to be very generous in the matter of milk. Suppose he demanded pay for it on the basis he had suggested!

She rounded the building and went into the cow stables. On a nail in the wall hung a lantern, and the farmer sat milking a cow.

"Hello, Oscar!" was her greeting. "I saw Miss Eve, but I didn't tell her nothin' about the kisses you wanted."

Bennett turned and studied her curiously, taking quick stock of her, even to the brown of her bare feet. No, he had not made a mistake in summing her up that morning.

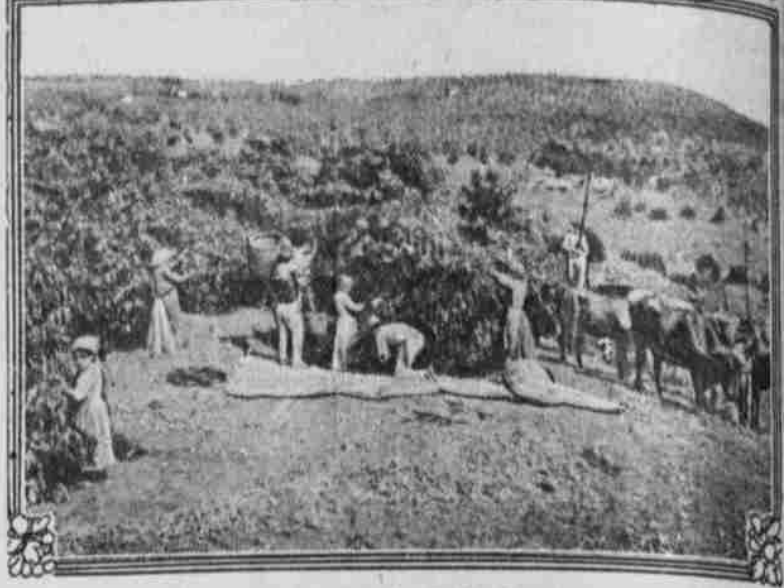
"You better hadn't," he growled, without interrupting his work. "I suppose you brought me some fool message from her, eh?" Having finished the cow, he rose and stood with the brimming pail of milk in his hand.

"She sent you, didn't she?"

"Evelyn! I-I-I believe you care for me, I really believe you do!"

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

# Sao Paulo, Where Coffee Is King



Harvesting the Coffee Crop.

(Prepared by the National Geographic Society, Washington, D. C.)

On the gentle sloping hillsides of the northern portion of a single state of the great Brazilian republic there are some 700,000,000 coffee trees. Here on the famous rich, red soil (terra rossa), under extraordinarily favorable climatic conditions, the state of Sao Paulo is producing annually close to three-quarters of the world's total coffee crop. Small wonder it is that this state ranks so high in the number and in the character of its population; in the development of its railroads; in its general commercial and industrial activity. Small wonder is it that the city of Sao Paulo is so full of life and energy; that Santos has become so famous a port, that the Santos docks and the Sao Paulo railway attract so many visitors. Coffee is the mainspring of all this development. Coffee is the prevailing topic of conversation. Coffee is the key to the financial situation. Coffee is king.

As a famous waterfall, or an immense steel plant, or a great forest, or a wonderful view attracts the traveler, so this remarkable Brazilian coffee district has a fascination all its own for the "globe-trotter," or for the more leisurely traveler who seeks to know something more definite about our South American neighbors; or, more particularly, for any one to whom man's achievements in changing the face of nature by making the earth produce what he needs and what he finds profitable are a source of satisfaction and inspiration.

## Journey of Great Interest.

The heart of the coffee country can be reached in less than three weeks from New York. The voyage to and from Rio Janeiro is a delight which cannot fail to satisfy even those who are not naturally lovers of the sea. What can be more ideal for any one who is tired out with the wear and tear of a busy life than that voyage of two weeks from New York to Rio, over the calm seas and under the bright skies of the tropics?

From Rio de Janeiro a journey of about eight hours takes the traveler across the coast range of mountains (Serra do Mar) and along the valley of the Parahyba river to the city of Sao Paulo, which lies in a position of immense advantage to its commercial development. From the city of Sao Paulo the heart of the coffee country is reached in a short day's journey along one of the lines of railroad which go in a northerly or northwesterly direction across the open campos or through the scattering woodlands.

In about two hours after leaving the city of Sao Paulo the traveler begins to see the first considerable coffee plantations, and from that time on the journey is one of the greatest interest. Coffee is everywhere. Miles and miles of coffee trees stretch away, up and down the gentle slopes of the rolling topography, often as far as the eye can see—great broad waves of green, with the narrow lines of the red soil showing in marked contrast with the green of the leaves. It is a sight which is not soon forgotten. Here and there are small patches of forest which have not yet been destroyed to make way for the coffee. And then there come great stretches of rugged grasslands, partly used for grazing purposes, or lately for farming, where the soil is not right for the coffee tree.

## Charm of the Fazendas.

On the lower slopes of the hills or in the lowlands, standing out in marked contrast with the green coffee trees, are the white buildings of the fazendas—great, substantial stone and stucco manor houses, with wide verandas and large windows, surrounded by gardens filled with palm, and banana, and orange, and mango trees; the extensive outbuildings, for the stables and for the machinery, for the laborers and for the superintendent, being placed at a respectful distance from the manor house.

All these Brazilian fazendas have a peculiar charm—an appearance of solidarity, of comfort, of peace, and of prosperity—as they lie there, surrounded by the wealth of their coffee trees, with cattle grazing on the neighboring fields, and with ever-busy, picturesque Italian laborers caring for the precious crop, whose market prices are quoted daily in all the important papers throughout the civilized world. The coffee trees on a Brazilian plantation begin to bear in from two to

four years after they have been removed from the nurseries, where they grow in wicker baskets, under shade. The fruit, when ripe, is red, and resembles a small cherry, or cranberry, in general appearance. The coffee which we see in the grocery store is the seed of this coffee berry.

Normally each berry contains two seeds, flat on one side and rounded on the other, the flat sides being together. The seeds are imbedded in a sticky, whitish pulp, and are further themselves surrounded by two envelopes.

Before the coffee bean can be put upon the market the outer covering, the pulp, and the two inner coverings must be removed. It is customary to classify the methods of preparing coffee for market into the wet and the dry. They are alike, after a certain stage, and there is disagreement among experts as to the relative merits of the two in producing the best coffee. In the dry process the berries are dried before the pulp is removed, and the outer covering, pulp, and inner coverings are removed together. In the wet process the pulp is first removed in water, and the drying and removal of the inner envelopes come later. There is no absolutely hard and fast rule, invariably followed on all fazendas alike, in the preparation for market of the coffee beans.

A considerable water supply and a carefully planned system of small canals and of basins is needed in the wet method, and it is partly for this reason, as well as because of the preference of some fazendeiros for the dry method, that the wet method is not everywhere in use.

## Harvest Lasts Several Months.

The harvest begins in May and lasts into August, or even September. This is the dry season, so that the weather conditions are very favorable, not only for the harvest itself, but for drying and transporting the crop after it has been gathered. In picking the coffee, the boughs are pulled down with the left hand and held at the outer end, while the right hand is run along the bough from the base to the tip, thus stripping off the berries as well as many leaves and twigs. For the upper branches rude step-ladders are used.

The usual method of harvesting is to let the berries, twigs, etc., fall directly on the ground, where they are later raked together with wire rakes with rounded teeth, and the first rough sorting is made. The next stage is a winnowing by means of a wire sieve, the hand being used to pick out the twigs and leaves and the wind blowing away a good deal of the dust as the contents of the sieve are thrown up into the air and caught again several times. In a less common method the results of the harvesting are allowed to fall into cotton cloths spread out underneath the trees. This makes the gathering of the crop quicker. The berries are then assembled in sacks.

From this point on the berries are subjected to various mechanical treatments. Under the "wet method" they are washed, churned with hoes, allowed to soften, and are then run through a mechanical pulper. The seeds, still enveloped by their inner skins, are strained from the "mash" resulting from the pulping operations, and are then placed in basins to ferment slightly so that any remaining pulp will be loosened. They are then spread out on large paved surfaces to dry in the sun. When properly dried the seeds are gathered up and run through ingenious machines which rub off the skin. The particles of skin are sifted and blown out and the coffee beans—hulled, cleaned and sorted—fall directly from the last machine into the bags. When these contain 132 pounds each they are sewed up and are ready for shipment to market.

Along the roads, deep in red dust, six or eight yoke of oxen draw the heavy wagon, loaded with the precious sacks, to the nearest railroad station. In cases where the railroad does not come directly into the fazenda, as it often does,

Off to the south go the trains, first to the city of Sao Paulo, and then down the steep eastern slopes of the Serra do Mar to the world's famous coffee port, Santos, coffee absolutely dominates the lives of the people. Coffee is everywhere—on the streets, in the warehouses, on the train. Every one is busy with coffee